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MY VISION FOR EDUCATION -

Better parenting and mentoring, innovative teaching done with compassion, and providing a holistic and progressive environment in homes and schools.

I believe that children learn best in an environment that encourages freedom to think, explore, create and innovate, nurtured with loving kindness, attention and discipline. I have read that children need and crave not only love, but also discipline, I have witnessed it amply during my years as a teacher and mother. I do believe this is the approach I bring to all that I do as a parent, teacher and counsellor.

Having taught at various schools, I have had the opportunity to teach at multiple grade levels, with diverse student profiles, including students with learning challenges. I believe, that with my deep interest in child psychology and learning challenges in children, I bring a true understanding of the many factors affecting the education of children today.

As Representative of Trinity College London in my region, I bring additional value to the schooling process by guiding students to take the Trinity College London certification in Speech & Drama, Communication Skills, Music and Performance Arts, if so required.

APPROACH TO TEACHING

- Developing and implementing engaging, effective lessons in all subject areas for a heterogeneous group of learners, as well as students from different cultural backgrounds and countries
- Designing and integrating hands-on activities to foster student engagement and learning
- Working collaboratively with other teachers and professionals to create effective lessons that meet the learning needs and abilities of all students
- Developed and introduced a Reading Programme appropriate for students of from K-12, in the schools where I worked, and for other schools as well
- Organizing and creating learning centres, bulletin boards and class displays
- Attending parent conferences, faculty and team meetings. Actively participating in activities, which include assessing student progress, assigning grades, maintaining attendance and other records, keeping parents/guardians informed through progress reports and feedback sessions
- Working with culturally, socially and economically diverse groups of learners, with different ability levels. Teaching students with learning challenges and special needs within a mainstreamed, inclusive classroom
- Incorporating an inquiry-based method of learning to provide an opportunity for challenge and academic growth for students, to instill confidence and encourage student achievement
- Developing innovative approaches that have been repeatedly held up as the model standard for meeting goals in areas involving integration across the curriculum, experiential learning and literacy.
- Consistently been recognized for the quality and creativity of classroom teaching, lesson plans and instructional materials used in teaching diverse subjects (e.g. language, arts, mathematics, science and social studies)
- Consistently been commended for ability to redirect students exhibiting behavioural problems by replacing disruptive, unproductive patterns with positive ones
- Teaching of English Language and Literature – Have successfully initiated hundreds of children, aged 4 to 16 years, into the reading habit, using literature (classic and contemporary) - poetry, prose and drama
- Using Storytelling and Drama techniques to create interest in reading, learning and achieving high levels of

student engagement, along with marked improvement in concentration and focus, listening, speaking, reading and writing skills among students

TEACHING & LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

- *The Blue Mountains School, Ooty, The Nilgiris*. K-12 (CAIE). November 2022 to present. **Principal**.
- *Life Express UnSchool, Dehradun*. K-10 (CAIE). July 2016 to October 2022. **Founder and Principal**.
Apart from being Head of School, I taught all subjects – English, Maths, Science, EVS, History, Geography and Global Perspectives from Grades 1-8 and English Literature to IGCSE classes
- *Graphic Era Global School, Dehradun*. K-5 (CAIE). April 2015 to March 2016. **Founding Principal**.
- *Life Express School for Creative Learning and Performing Arts, Dehradun*. April 2009 to present. **Founder and Co-ordinator**.
- Took a *sabbatical from December 2000 to March 2009* to raise my three children, which has inspired me to do more significant work in the field of parenting and education.
- *St. Joseph's Academy, Dehradun*. K-12 (ICSE). 1999-2000 - Taught all subjects – English, Maths, Science, History, Geography and General Awareness to Grade 4 for two years.
- *Wynberg-Allen School, Mussoorie*. K-12 (ICSE). 1998 - Taught all subjects – English, Maths, EVS, Social Studies, Hindi and General Awareness to Grade 2 for one year (ICSE curriculum).
- *Mussoorie International School, Mussoorie*. K-12 (CAIE). 1996 and 1997 - Taught all subjects – English, Maths, EVS, Science, History, Geography and General Awareness to Grade 3 for two years (Cambridge curriculum).
- *Shishya School, Selaqui, Dehradun*. K-12 (CBSE) 1996 and 1997 - Volunteered in this village school during my three-month winter breaks in Mussoorie schools. Taught English Literature and Language, History, Civics, Economics, Biology and Chemistry to Classes 8, 9 and 10 (CBSE curriculum).

AN OVERVIEW OF WORK EXPERIENCE

1. The Blue Mountains School (November 2022 to present)

The School follows the Cambridge curriculum, with students taking the Primary and Lower Secondary Checkpoints, IGCSE, AS and A Level exams.

I joined BMS to expand my horizons and gain experience in leading an international school, in a residential setup, with classes K-12. The School needed a Head who would be able to set it back on track and provide the way forward. Since taking on this position, I put all systems in place, academic or otherwise. In this short duration, I have been able to accomplish a significant amount of change and evolution.

Role and responsibilities as Principal of The Blue Mountains School

My responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Plan, organize, direct, control and evaluate the delivery of classroom and outdoor teaching
- Hold regular training sessions for teachers on creative lesson planning, classroom management, approach to teaching, compassion and listening, teaching values, handling diverse learners, testing and assessment
- Regular interaction with parents – counselling and feedback
- Plan, organize and execute workshops
- Locate, manage, direct human resources and teaching aids
- Scheduling and timetabling

- Conduct recruitment, appointment, training, and evaluation of teaching and administrative staff
- Financial planning and administration of the School
- Develop a strong team, which can work with the vision and mission of the School, handle day-to-day affairs, invest in growth and learning, and put good teaching practices in place

Significant Achievements as Principal of The Blue Mountains School

In this short duration, I have achieved the following:

- Introduced the Cambridge Checkpoints at the Primary and Secondary levels
- Introduced a proper curriculum for History, Civics and Geography from Grades 1 through 8.
- Introduced the Global Perspectives and Computer Science curriculum from Elementary through High School and World Literature, Global Perspectives, ICT at the IGCSE, AS and A Levels.
- Introduced Music (Instrumental and Vocal) and set up the Music School with proper instruments and equipment. Hired teachers with experience in teaching music using notation, and in preparing students to take international assessments. Started the Music for Little Mozarts and Alfred's Premier Programs for Kindergarten and Elementary students, with a trained and qualified teacher.
- Started the Drama department and conducted Teachers' Training in Speech and Drama, Communication Skills, Performance Arts and Musical Theatre, in collaboration with the Academic Support Team of Trinity College London.
- Developed a comprehensive fitness and sports program. Hired professional coaches and introduced new sports and fitness routines. Introduced regular morning and evening exercise and games schedules for students from KG through 12. Spearheaded the construction of the basketball court, football field and cricket pitch to meet international standards and quality.
- Developed the Outdoor Learning Program with treks, cycling trips, excursions, etc.
- Worked on developing a strong Community Outreach Program, in collaboration with some clubs and NGOs in the area.
- Held regular training sessions for teachers in creative lesson planning, classroom management, delivering the Cambridge curriculum in a holistic manner, using the Teachers' Resources effectively, using technology and innovation in better and creative ways in the teaching-learning process, while also helping students to develop 21st century skills, as well as use technology responsibly.
- Hired new teaching and administrative staff to meet the growing needs created by these changes, and ensured that all the new staff received proper teacher training from Cambridge.
- Introduced progress tests and assessments like CAT, PASS, NGRT and NGST from GL Assessments, UK to monitor progress of students within school, and be able to assess students seeking admission more holistically and effectively.
- The School did not have a Student Counsellor, and being a residential school, there was an urgent need. Spearheaded the search for one, and finally hired a qualified counsellor, who is now helping both students and staff.
- Hired a Special Educator for SEN, who conducted assessments of students with learning difficulties and is working with these students regularly. The entire teaching staff underwent a six-month workshop in identifying learning styles, challenges and needs, and how to work with these students within an inclusive classroom.
- Hired a full-time, qualified nurse practitioner and helped set up a fully equipped infirmary, as it is very crucial in a residential setup.
- Trained teachers across the School and put together a robust Storytelling and Reading curriculum that is proven to develop the love for books and reading, the spirit of enquiry and a desire to learn.
- Worked on developing a strong team, which can work with the vision and mission of the School, and be exponents and advocates of good teaching practices.
- Revamped the kitchen, brought in appliances, faster and more effective cooking methods, restructured the menu and brought in a more nutrition-rich diet, as well as introduced different regional and international cuisines to help students develop a more eclectic and healthy palate.
- Brought in essential and crucial changes in the residential areas, revamping the furniture, facilities, and general living conditions.

2. Life Express UnSchool (July 2016 to October 2022)

To take my vision of education to as many parents and children as possible, *I founded UnSchool in 2016.*

UnSchool is a community of parents and teachers committed to providing the right education to our children. UnSchool is currently up to Class 10. I taught English, Hindi, EVS, Global Perspectives, History and Geography to Primary through Middle School (Cambridge Primary Checkpoint and Lower Secondary Checkpoint), and English Literature to the IGCSE classes. We follow the *Cambridge International Examinations curriculum (CAIE)*.

UnSchool is a day-boarding school - academics, enrichment activities and sports are all a part of the regular unSchool day.

At UnSchool, we believe that a school needs to:

- nurture creativity, expression, keeping in mind individual needs, talents and aspirations
- allow children the freedom to learn at their own pace
- help children to be confident, compassionate and creative
- give children the freedom to thrive socially, intellectually, experientially, academically, creatively, and personally
- prepare children to be leaders, be original, be critical thinkers, have good reasoning skills, and be able to think 'out-of-the-box'
- preserve the natural love of learning that children are born with

Role and responsibilities as Founder and Principal of Life Express UnSchool

My responsibilities included, but were not limited to:

- Plan, organize, direct, control and evaluate the delivery of classroom and outdoor teaching
- Hold regular training sessions for teachers on creative lesson planning, classroom management, approach to teaching, compassion and listening, teaching values, handling diverse learners, testing and assessment
- Regular interaction with parents – counselling and feedback
- Plan, organize and execute workshops
- Locate, manage, direct human resources and teaching aids
- Scheduling and timetabling
- Conduct recruitment, appointment, training, and evaluation of teaching and administrative staff
- Financial planning and administration of the School
- Develop a strong team, which can work with the vision and mission of Life Express UnSchool, handle day-to-day affairs, invest in personal growth and learning, and be exponents and advocates of good teaching practices

3. Life Express – School of Performing Arts & Creative Education

(April 2009 to present)

I founded Life Express in 2009, and in these years it has come to be known as a Centre for all-round development of children. We recognize and help nurture the value of the 'reading habit' in children. 'Readers' have far better language and communication skills, focus and persistence levels, creative abilities and, in general, are much less stressed about 'studying' and 'exams' as compared to their non-reader counterparts.

Storytelling, Reading and Drama - We have developed and perfected a curriculum that has proven to develop the love for books and reading, the spirit of enquiry and a desire to learn. This starts with storytelling sessions for children (3 years and up), moving to reading clubs and book clubs, in combination with the Speech and Drama program. We have also developed a holistic and dynamic training program for storytellers and teachers, which is quite sought after.

Music - With a deep understanding of the power of 'musical knowledge' for well-rounded learning among children, at Life Express we have created one of north India's largest Music labs, across 3 centres. We have brought in full-time Western Music teachers from other parts of the country to train our students and teachers at Life Express, as well as other independent schools. Most parents now understand the importance of learning to read and write music, and the music-teaching scenario in this area stands transformed.

Fine Arts - We have a wonderful Fine Arts department, where children and adults let their imagination 'fly and soar', as they discover, hone and nurture their creativity. Their passion and talents are truly inspiring. With years of counselling, it is encouraging to see that more parents are now letting their children 'be creative' and explore these talents as possible career choices.

Dance and Sports - The amazing world of dance and movement is fascinating to children and adults alike. We have students learning various forms of western and Indian dances. We have a fine PE department, with professional teachers working with students on fitness and training.

Assessments - We have regular assessments in Speech and Drama, Communication Skills, Music Theory and Performance, Musical Theatre and Performance Arts from Trinity College London, with excellent results. Life Express is also the hub for Indian Classical Performing Arts assessments from Prayag Sangeet Samiti, Allahabad, and our students take assessments in Indian Classical Dance and Music.

Role and responsibilities as Founder, Director and Coordinator of Life Express School of Performing Arts and Creative Education

My responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Plan, organize, direct, control and evaluate the delivery of programmes.
- Regular interaction with parents – counselling and feedback
- Plan, organize and execute regular training sessions and workshops for teachers
- Locate, manage and direct human resources and teaching aids
- Scheduling and timetabling
- Develop and administer new and innovative programs for children as well as adults
- Conduct recruitment, appointment, training, and evaluation of teaching and administrative staff
- Financial planning and control of the Centre

4. Area Representative - Trinity College London (October 2013 to present)

Role and responsibilities as Coordinator of the Registered Examination Hub, TCL

My responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Enrolling candidates and dealing with any candidates' requests, appeals and feedback
- Handling all payments, fees and other financial operations for Trinity College London in the region
- Organizing Exam Session timetables and the safekeeping of Trinity Exam materials
- Hosting open sessions for Trinity Exams with adequate amenities for candidates and Trinity examiners, and ensuring the required level of stewarding and monitoring during Exam Sessions
- Distributing appointment and confirmation slips, reports, results, and certificates to candidates
- Assisting Trinity with conducting investigations and general monitoring duties
- Upholding the terms and requirements of Trinity's syllabi and regulations, information and guidance notified from time to time as applicable to the Trinity exams, and ensuring these are communicated to candidates and teachers, as appropriate
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that Trinity can comply with the conditions of recognition of any regulatory body recognizing or governing any of the Trinity Qualifications
- Liaising with other Registered Exam Centres in the Area, including mentoring them in Trinity's syllabi, regulations, policies and procedures
- Participating in academic surveys and research organized by Trinity concerning its qualifications and exams and best practice in educational standards
- Assisting Trinity with conducting trials with new Trinity Qualifications
- Assisting Trinity with building its teacher communities by organizing and/or participating in educational and training events for teachers
- Advising and assisting Trinity with obtaining recognition and currency for Trinity qualifications and exams

5. Chairperson - YWCA Dehradun Chapter (July 2014 to August 2015)

Role and responsibilities as Chairperson of YWCA, Dehradun (Pro-bono position)

My responsibilities here included, but were not limited to:

- Heading the Project Committee
- Conducting meetings with regard to visioning, deliberation, debate and discussion of the work and activities of the YWCA of India
- Taking decisions related to business and finance
- Help build resource contacts and fundraise for community-based programmes
- Provide service to and generate income for YWCA's advocacy, development and empowerment programmes

COUNSELLING EXPERIENCE

For the last 20 years, I have been conducting numerous workshops and seminars on parenting issues and the need for balanced education; as opposed to the 'rote learning' system that most schools, teachers, parents and students are a part of. Addressing parent bodies, teachers, and school administrators, I have spoken to more than 60,000 people over the years.

I also counsel on parenting, education, personal and spiritual growth. I have written many articles and blogs on parenting and teaching, and my book on these issues - 'Love is the Answer', is scheduled to be released soon.

EDUCATION

- Cambridge Exams Officer's Training
- Primary and Lower Secondary Checkpoint Registration and Training for support site
- Workshop on 'Key Pedagogies Underpinning the New Cambridge Resources'
- Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET), qualified in December 2019
- Masters in English Literature, 2001, from H.N.B. Garhwal University, Uttarakhand
- Bachelors in Education, 1996, from DWT College, Dehradun (H.N.B. Garhwal University)
- Bachelors in Commerce, 1993, from St. John's College, Agra (Agra University)
- Indian School Certificate Examination (Class XII), 1990, from St. Thomas' College, Dehradun
- Indian Council for Secondary Examination (Class X), 1988, from St. Paul's College, Agra

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Seminars and Workshops related to Teaching:

- Inter-disciplinary Learning in Primary Education (Teachers' Centre, The Doon School)
- Teaching Values in the Classroom (Chinmaya Mission)
- Identifying and Mentoring ADD and ADHD students (Children First, New Delhi)
- Identifying and Mentoring Giftedness in students (Children First, New Delhi)
- Creative Lesson Planning for Diverse Learners
- Curriculum Development
- Classroom Management and Discipline
- Standardized Testing/Scoring and Learner Assessment
- Experiential Learning
- Reading Skills for Primary through Senior School

Other Seminars and Workshops:

- Role of Music in Education
- Piano - Learning and Teaching (including Music for Little Mozarts by Alfred Publishing Company)
- Mindfulness in Education (Thich Nhat Hanh, Ahimsa Trust)
- 9-Day School and Prayer Ministry Training in Inner Healing and Deliverance (Adonai Ministries, Bangalore)

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATION

- Certificate Course in Computer Applications and Programming.
- Diploma in Computer Programming and Applications from Hiltron Calc.
- Diploma in Travel and Tourism Management, Delhi Chapter, Indian Institute of Travel and Tourism Management.
- Proficient in MS Office, Adobe Indesign, Libre Office and all Apple Office software.

ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

- Worked with 'The Doon City Chronicle' from 1995-1996, on their editorial board.
- Handled the Air Travel Division at Nitco Travel Agency in New Delhi from 1993-1995.
- Worked with Hiltron Calc. from 1991-1993 as Student Counsellor, while pursuing my Bachelor's Degree.

HONOURS AND ACTIVITIES

In school and college:

- Singing – Solo and Choir
- Dance – Western and Indian (classical and folk)
- Sports – Cross-country, relay racing, marathons, high and long jump, badminton, basketball, table-tennis, gymnastics
- Elocution and Debating
- Theatre and Drama
- Creative Writing
- Best All-Round Student consecutively from Grades 4-12
- School Head-Girl

FAMILY

My husband, Ajay Mehta, is a Print & Visual Designer and Consultant, providing visual communication, digital and print solutions to many premium educational and corporate organizations for the past 30 years. He is an *Associate of Trinity College London (ATCL)*, and a member of TCL's Academic Support Team for Drama & Performance and Communication Skills.

We have three wonderful children –

- Son, aged 22 – Year 4 at Berklee College of Music, USA / Alumn, Woodstock School, Mussoorie
- Son, aged 19 – Year 2 at Western University, Canada / Alumn, Woodstock School, Mussoorie
- Daughter, aged 15 – Grade 10 at Life Express UnSchool



(Juhi Malini Mehta)

Dated: 01 January 2024